

Boycotting Israel from Within: Military Service Refusal as an Example

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Abstract:

This study dealt with two phenomena that represent dissension from the mainstream in the Israeli arena, the first is Israeli movements which oppose and fight against state policies from within, including the movement “BOYCOTT! Supporting the Palestinian BDS call from within”, which came to be known as the Israeli BDS. The second is the phenomenon of refusing military service in the Israeli army, for various reasons, including religious, ethnic, and conscientious moral- political reasons. It examined the relationship between them, and some of the official (from the state, the military) and popular reactions to them, as well as the extent to which they influenced State policies.

Among the most important reasons for the study was the lack of academic studies (in Arabic), that deals with the phenomenon of boycotting Israel from within, as well as the rejection of military service there, in addition to the relationship between them and reactions to them.

The study’s objectives were to examine the concepts of boycott and the rejection of military service in Israel, and to study the reasons that prompt citizens of a country to call on the world to punish their own state by boycott, as well as some of the forms which dissenting movements use to resist state- policies. In addition, to find the reasons that push soldiers or upcoming recruits of this state to refuse service, especially when considering the fact, that it’s a state where the army is considered a sacred cow, because the country is seen to have been “born out of war”, and the fact that the army is the supposed melting

pot, that creates the core aspect of the Israeli identity, rendering the concept of military refusal incomprehensible. The study also aims to examine possible crossing of motives between state- boycott and military service refusal.

The temporal boundaries of the study include the period from the establishment of Israel in 1948 until the present time 2018, in order to facilitate tracing of the different stages of both

phenomena: boycott from within and refusing military service, as well as their causes and consequences.

The spatial boundaries of the study are the State of Israel, and the historic land of Palestine.

The researcher used the historical method to trace the two phenomena in terms of origin and development, and the modality by which the state dealt with each of them, and the progression of societal reactions towards them; the scientific method was also used which allowed analysis of the content of the information studied in order to reach the results.

Among the important findings in the study is the linkage between the dissenting movements and the moral-political refusal to serve in the military, indicating that the relationship between them is intertwined, they influence one another, and can be considered as two sides of a single coin, because their source is the same: rejection of occupation and non-democratic practices by the Israeli state.